

D.P.U. 96-6A

Application of Massachusetts Electric Company:

(1) under the provisions of G.L. c. 164, § 94G and the Company's tariff, M.D.P.U. No. 797, for approval by the Department of Public Utilities of a change in the quarterly fuel charge to be billed to the Company's customers pursuant to meter readings in the billing months of April, May, and June 1996; and

(2) for approval by the Department of rates to be paid to Qualifying Facilities for the purchases of power pursuant to 220 C.M.R. §§ 8.00 et seq. The rules established in 220 C.M.R. §§ 8.00 et seq. set forth the filings to be made by electric utilities with the Department, and implement the intent of §§ 201 and 210 of the Public Utilities Regulatory Policies Act of 1978.

APPEARANCE: Thomas G. Robinson, Jr., Esq.
New England Power Service Company
25 Research Drive
Westborough, Massachusetts 01582-0005
FOR: MASSACHUSETTS ELECTRIC COMPANY
Applicant

I. INTRODUCTION

On March 4, 1996, pursuant to G.L. c. 164, § 94G and 220 C.M.R. §§ 8.00 et seq., Massachusetts Electric Company ("Company") notified the Department of Public Utilities ("Department") of the Company's intent to file a quarterly change to its fuel charge in conformance with its tariff, M.D.P.U. No. 797, and to its Qualifying Facility ("QF") power purchase rates in conformance with its tariff, M.D.P.U. No. 859-B. The Company requested that both these changes be effective for bills issued pursuant to meter readings for the billing months of April, May, and June 1996. The matter was docketed as D.P.U. 96-6A.

Pursuant to notice duly issued, a public hearing on the Company's application was held on March 25, 1996 at the Department's offices in Boston. Notice of the hearing was published by the Company in the Boston Herald, Worcester Telegram, Lynn Item, Lawrence Eagle-Tribune, Berkshire Eagle, Springfield Daily News, and the Patriot Ledger. The Company also complied with the requirement to mail a copy of the notice of the hearing to all persons with whom the Company has special retail contracts that do not incorporate a filed rate, and to all intervenors and their respective counsel from the Company's prior two fuel charge proceedings. No petitions for leave to intervene were filed. At the hearing, the Company sponsored one witness: Jose A. Rotger, senior rate analyst, New England Power Service Company ("NEPSCo"). The evidentiary record consists of one Company exhibit.

MECo, a wholly owned subsidiary of New England Electric System ("NEES"), serves on average 906,036 customers in its service territory, which includes over 146 cities and towns located predominately in northeast and central Massachusetts. NEES's other subsidiaries,

affiliates of MECo, include New England Power Company ("NEP"); Granite State Electric Company in New Hampshire; Narragansett Electric Company in Rhode Island; NEPSco, which provides engineering, technical, and other services for NEES companies; and New England Energy, Inc. MECo purchases all of its power requirements at wholesale from NEP pursuant to rates regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ("FERC"). MECo does not own or operate any generating units.

II. FUEL CHARGE

On March 21, 1996, the Company filed with the Department a revised version of its proposed changes to its fuel charge and QF power purchase rates for April, May, and June 1996.¹ For these billing months, the Company proposes a fuel charge of \$0.02705 per kilowatthour ("KWH"). The proposed fuel charge is \$0.00239 per KWH higher than the fuel charge of \$0.02466 per KWH approved by the Department in Massachusetts Electric Company, D.P.U. 95-6D (1995) for meter readings for the billing months of January, February, and March 1996.

Mr. Rotger stated that the increase in the Company's proposed fuel charge is attributable to a projected increase in the fuel costs for the second quarter of 1996 as compared to the fuel costs projected in the first quarter of 1996 (Exh. M-1, at 8; Tr. at 7). In particular, the primary contributor to the increase in projected fuel costs is an increase in the price of natural gas by twenty cents per MMBtu and an increase in the price of fuel oil by one dollar per barrel (Tr. at 7).

III. QUALIFYING FACILITIES

¹ The Company filed its proposed changes initially on March 15, 1996 which understated fuel revenues by approximately \$500,000 (Tr. at 11).

Pursuant to the Department's rules, 220 C.M.R. §§ 8.00 et seq., rates to be paid to QFs for short-run power purchases are set with the same frequency as the fuel charge. A QF is a small power producer or cogenerator that meets the criteria established by the FERC in 18 C.F.R. § 292.203(a) and adopted by the Department in 220 C.M.R. § 8.02.

Pursuant to 220 C.M.R. § 8.04(4), the Company is required to calculate short-run energy purchase rates on a time-of-supply basis for two rating periods: peak and off-peak. In addition, the Company is required to calculate a non-time-differentiated rate, i.e., a total-period rate, which is a weighted average of the time-of-supply rates, where the weighting is a function of the number of hours in each rating period. See 220 C.M.R. § 8.04(4)(b). The Company is also required, under 220 C.M.R. § 8.04(6)(b), to file its short-run capacity purchase rates, calculated on a KWH basis by voltage level, according to the formula in 200 C.M.R. § 8.04(6)(a).

The Company has proposed the following standard rates to be paid to QFs during April, May, and June 1996:

Energy Rates by Voltage Level (Dollars/KWH)

<u>Voltage Level</u>	<u>Peak</u>	<u>Off-Peak</u>	<u>Total</u>
Transmission	\$0.02300	\$0.01936	\$0.02075
Subtransmission	\$0.02344	\$0.01949	\$0.02099
Distribution	\$0.02438	\$0.01994	\$0.02163
Secondary	\$0.02456	\$0.02002	\$0.02175

(Exh. M-1, at 67).

Short-Run Capacity Rates (Dollars/KWH)Voltage Level

Transmission	\$0.02495
Subtransmission	\$0.02568
Distribution	\$0.02738
Secondary	\$0.02762

(id. at 69).

IV. FINDINGS

Based on the foregoing, the Department finds:

1. that the fuel charge to be applied to Company bills issued pursuant to meter readings for the billing months of April, May, and June 1996, shall be \$0.02705 per KWH. The calculation of the fuel charge is shown in Table 1 attached to this Order.

2. that the qualifying facility power purchase rates for April, May, and June 1996, shall be the rates set forth in Section III above.

V. ORDER

Accordingly, after due notice, hearing, and consideration, it is

ORDERED: That Massachusetts Electric Company is authorized to put into effect a quarterly fuel charge of \$0.02705 per KWH as set forth in Section IV, Finding 1 of this Order for bills issued pursuant to meter readings for the billing months of April, May, and June 1996, subject to refund; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED: That the fuel charge approved herein shall apply to kilowatthours sold to the Company's customers subject to the jurisdiction of the Department and shall be itemized separately on all such customers' electric bills; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED: That the Company's Qualifying Facility power purchase rates for the billing months of April, May, and June 1996, shall be those set forth in the Table on pages 3 and 4 of this Order; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED: That the Company, in all future fuel charge proceedings, shall notify all intervenors and their respective counsel from the Company's prior two fuel charge proceedings that it is proposing an adjustment to its fuel charge, and shall also notify these persons of the date scheduled for the hearing on the proposed fuel charge at least ten days in advance of the hearing; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED: That the Company, in all future fuel charge proceedings, shall provide all intervenors and their respective counsel from the prior two fuel charge proceedings with a copy of its fuel charge filing, in hand or by facsimile, on the same day it is filed with the Department; and it is

FURTHER ORDERED: That, pursuant to G.L. c. 164, §§ 94G (a) and (b), the fuel costs allowed by this Order are subject to such disallowance as the Department may determine in any subsequent investigation of the Company's performance period that includes the quarter applicable to the present charges.

By Order of the Department,

John B. Howe
Chairman

Mary Clark Webster
Commissioner

Janet Gail Besser
Commissioner

Appeal as to any matters of law from any final decision, order or ruling of the Commission may be taken to the Supreme Judicial Court by an aggrieved party in interest by the filing of a written petition praying that the Order of the Commission be modified or set aside in whole or in part.

Such petition for appeal shall be filed with the Secretary of the Commission within twenty days after the date of service of the decision, order or ruling of the Commission, or within such further time as the Commission may allow upon request filed prior to the expiration of twenty days after the date of service of said decision, order or ruling. Within ten days after such petition has been filed, the appealing party shall enter the appeal in the Supreme Judicial Court sitting in Suffolk County by filing a copy thereof with the Clerk of said Court.

(Sec. 5, Chapter 25, G.L. Ter. Ed., as most recently amended by Chapter 485 of the Acts of 1971).